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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/589,988

08/18/2006

Satoshi Hirano

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7590

12/17/2008

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET

SUITE 1800

ARLINGTON, VA 22209-3873

EXAMINER

PATEL, DEVANG R

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1793

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/17/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/589,988

Applicant(s)

HIRANO ET AL.

Examiner

DEVANG PATEL

Art Unit

1793

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 October 2008.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-5 and 9-14 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 6 and 7 is/are rejected.
7) ☒ Claim(s) 8 is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 August 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB-08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/18/06, 10/31/08
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of claims 6-8 in the reply filed on 10/31/08 is acknowledged.

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. **Claim 6** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirano et al. (US 6540128).

- a. **Regarding claim 6**, Hirano et al. discloses a friction stir-spot welding apparatus for inserting a welding tool 11 [fig. 1] being symmetrical with respect to a shaft, while rotating under a pressure into a portion of a member to be welded, thereby to heat and soften the member in the neighborhood of the welding tool by friction heat so as to integrate the member at a welding portion, including:
- i. a servo motor 2b (i.e. driving device) for driving the welding tool in the direction of the rotation shaft thereof [fig. 1; col. 9, line 59]; and

- ii. a rotation shaft conversion device 7/4c (pivoting member & fulcrum, col. 9, line 42, 66) for converting the rotation shaft of the welding tool.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. **Claim 7** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirano (US 6540128) as applied to claim 6 above, and in view of Fujiwara (JP 10052761 A).

- b. **As to claim 7**, Hirano discloses the driving device including a moving motor 2b for moving a welding head up-down (col. 9, line 62), holding the welding tool 11 in the direction of the rotation shaft of the welding tool.

c. Hirano fails to disclose a belt for transferring the rotation force of the motor to a ball spring. Fujiwara (drawn to resistance welding apparatus) discloses a servo motor 2 (analogous to servomotor of Hirano) and a belt 7 for transferring the rotation force of the motor to a ball screw spring 15/33 [fig. 1; abstract]. Fujiwara also discloses a guide rod 30 guided with a guide plate 32 (i.e. guide support), which in turn guides the top electrode (i.e. welding head) [¶ 19]. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to employ driving device similar to Fujiwara in the apparatus of Hirano in order to obtain good welding and reduce welding time by restraining the vibration of a welding head (abstract).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 8 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: Prior art fails to disclose a welding rotation shaft including a hummer, one end of which is connected to a welding head swing shaft having one point as a fulcrum; and a stopper to which the other end of the hummer collides when the welding head comes down. Kano et al. (US 6832713) discloses a spot joining apparatus with a servomotor, belt, screw shaft and a guide member, but does not disclose a hummer or a stopper as claimed. Kashiki et al. (US 2003/0029903)

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discloses a friction stir joining apparatus similar to that of Applicant but does not disclose a hummer or a stopper.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 10/31/08, 8/18/06 is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

Conclusion

The rejections above rely on the references for all the teachings expressed in the text of the references and/or one of ordinary skill in the art would have reasonably understood from the texts. Only specific portions of the texts have been pointed out to emphasize certain aspects of the prior art, however, each reference as a whole should be reviewed in responding to the rejection, since other sections of the same reference and/or various combinations of the cited references may be relied on in future rejections in view of amendments.

Applicant is reminded to specifically point out the support for any amendments made to the disclosure. See 37 C.F.R. 1.121; 37 C.F.R. Part 41.37; and MPEP 714.02.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DEVANG PATEL whose telephone number is (571)270-3636. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Thursday, 8:00 am to 5:30 pm, EST..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jessica Ward can be reached on 571-272-1223. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/D. P./

Examiner, Art Unit 1793

/Kiley Stoner/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793